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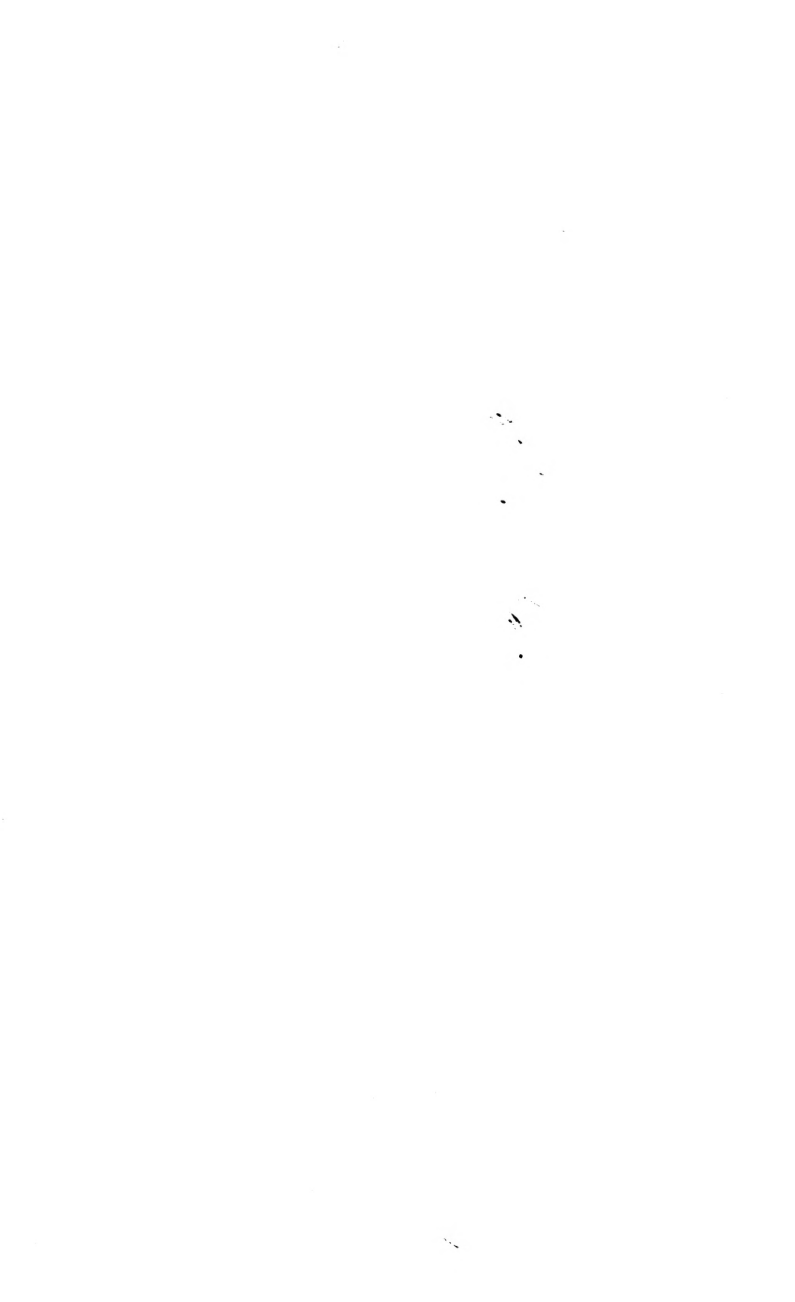
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



Manakating

*A story of two maidens
and one man.*

by Charles C. Ely.



New York.

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1896

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MANAKATING

Dedicated to the maidens.
To the maidens of this story.

MANAKATING.

A STORY OF TWO MAIDENS AND ONE MAN.

Scene—The Catskills.

IN the fall of five and ninety,
In the month of fair September,
From the people of the Northwest,
Ventured forth two comely maidens.
In their city were no fairer ;
Versed were they in modes of travel ;
Maps they'd studied and the guide-books,
Of the steamboats and the steamcars
That fly eastward to the Great Sea.
To the Catskills they were going,
All alone and hopeful going,
Far away up in the mountains,
Far away where sun is youngest,
Where the sun first sheds his brightness ;
Far away from home and kinsfolk ;

Far away 'mong strangers going,
To the wild land of the Hudson.
“Why, my daughters, will you go forth?”
Said Omeda, their fond mother;
“Leave your home, for what you know not,
Leave your father 'mong the pine hills,
Gone for wampum for the winter;
Leave your youngest sister Wawa,
Whom the lake winds handle roughly;
Leave your mother who restrains you;
Yet with fondness onward speeds you?”

Then responded Wanameta:
And the younger daughter, Leta:
“O my mother! O my sister!
Five and twenty summers o'er us,
Five and twenty years of wisdom,
And the dawn of woman's freedom,
Make us confident and able
Safely thus to take the journey.
If we cannot now, when can we?
Must we wait until we're married?
Must we draw you forth from duties?”

Must we drag papa from business ?
 When we want to take a journey ? ”
 “ Doubt I not that you are able,
 Well to make this journey, daughters,”
 Said their fond and anxious mother ;
 “ Else I would at home restrain you.
 Much in precepts have I taught you,
 Best example have I shown you,
 Now these parting words I give you :
 No more wild beasts now infest us ;
 They from man’s haunts long have perished ;
 Things have changed since Hiawatha,
 From the far east to Dakotas,
 In his mile-steps through the forest,
 Brought his heart to Minnehaha,
 Minnehaha—Laughing Water.
 Dangers always are in travel,
 And at home they oft beset us ;
 Dangers always are about us.
 Guard yourselves against the stranger,
 Place not too much trust in strangers.
 Your good conduct is your safety ;
 Your pure hearts your sole protection—

Guarded firmly by discretion.
Go, and take my blessing with you,
Go, and see the world before you."

Brought were great trunks from the attic ;
Filléd not with fox and bear skins ;
Filléd not with beads and red paint ;
Filléd not with flint and bowstring ;
Gone are they with the wild Redskin.
Nothing have these left behind them
Worthy of our imitation,
Save their fair names which we cherish ;
But with linen and with satin,
And with fine wool and with cotton,
Made with shuttle and with distaff,
Made by mills of new invention,
Are the trunks filled to congestion.

Leaving now they take of mother ;
'Bout her neck in fond embraces
Twine their arms, while o'er their faces
Sadness comes at thought of going.

Wawa, in her way most roguish :
 "Steel your hearts, or they will steal them ;
 Or perhaps you'd like to have them,
 Those far east men in the mountains."
 "O you naughty little Wawa!"
 Shouted both her elder sisters ;
 "O you roguish little Wawa !
 We shall bear ourselves discreetly ;
 Think we not of such grave matters ;
 We are going now 'mong strangers ;
 We can't tell what there may happen ;—
 Yet we feel that something beckons :
 Think we now it is the sunshine ;
 Think we now it is the mountain ;
 Think we now it is the Hudson,
 As it onward flows to ocean ;
 Sometimes think we 'tis the Great Fall,
 With her thund'ring roar of water."
 Smothered then was little Wawa ;
 Twelve sweet kisses, a full dozen,
 Planted on her cheeks and forehead,
 Planted on her lips and eyebrows,
 All to show their love for Wawa.

Not as Minnehaha went forth,
In her moccasins of deerskin,
Went these hopeful city maidens.
Where are cities, once were wigwams;
Farms there are where once were forests;
Steamers plow the mighty waters,
Where the Redman in his bark boat
Idly with his paddles cut them;
Where the Redman trailed the forest
Now the steamcars wind with swiftmess.
Went they by the lake and railways;
Passed they, on their journey eastward,
Busy cities big with commerce,
Villas quiet in contentment;
Passed they tracks of waving cornfields,
Fields of barley, oats and buckwheat,
Fields of stubble which had yielded
Willingly their golden harvest.
As at home they read bright novels;
Had their breakfast, luncheon, dinner;
As at home retired at even,
Though upon the boat and steamcars,
In this land of milk and honey,
Once the dwelling-place of Redmen.



FOR HE LACKED WHAT WAS MOST NEEDFUL.

Greatly changed is all about us
Since the dusky warrior left us,
For he lacked what most was needful ;
Lacked in heart, and soul, and purpose.
These the Pale-Face bringing with him,
Has transformed into a garden
What was once a sunless forest ;
Changed the wigwam for a palace ;
Filled his home with art and reading ;
Shut out famine and the fever ;
Made the winds and waves to serve him ;
Chained the lightning for his purpose ;
And, his heart no less a factor,
With the true unselfish instinct
Knows he all men as his brothers,
Teaches love and good-will to them.

Scarce two suns had reached their setting,
When our tourists both were landed
At the foothills of the mountain.
Five miles more of snailing stagecoach
Brought them to their destination ;

Brought them to her rugged bosom.
In the distance reared her forehead,
Bathed in sunshine or in storm-clouds,
As Dame Nature, in her fancies,
Smiled in kindness, frowned in anger.
Welcomed them the goodly landlord,
Showed them rooms and gave them welcome.

Little cause is there for wonder,
That a cloud of disappointment
Settled down upon these maidens :
For they found, 'mong strangers coming,
A plain house, closed in by mountains ;
Rooms devoid of every comfort,
Where things needful are but aimed at.
How unlike the fine descriptions
Of mine host, the goodly landlord !
Nothing up to expectation.
Had they found some dear old friend there,
One who knew them and their people,
One, perhaps, who loved them fondly—



"I AM SAD," SAID WANAMETA.

Would they then have been exacting?
Would they then have blamed the landlord?
Would they have regretted coming?
No; ah, no. Not mere surroundings
Only can make gladsome places,
For the heart yet yearns for faces
Which they know, and love, and cherish;
Cold the palace is without them.
Wonder not, then, that these maidens
Took themselves aside to ponder,
And to plan what they should next do;
Certain 'twas they would not stay there.
"I am sad," said Wanameta
To her sister; "Sad and lonely,
Sorry am I that I came here,
That I left my home and kinsfolk;
Would that I were there this minute!"
And, in tone expressing sadness,
And in manner most despairing,
Said she to her sister Leta:
'Let us think now what we shall do,
Let us think now, let us think now.'
Leta, who was not less thoughtful,

But less sad and less desponding :
“ Recollect you not, my sister,
Of the Mountain House called Catskill,
Lying somewhere in these mountains ?
Let us go there in the morning.”
Having thus disposed this question,
They addressed themselves to slumbers—
Sweet, because no doubts oppressed them,
Sweet, because fond hope sustained them.

Had the sun with cheeks aglow set,
Had the moon her nightly course run,
Had the dawn the hills and vales lit,
Had the fragrant breath of morn come.
In the early morn our tourists
Took the stagecoach that was waiting,
That for passengers was waiting.
Brightly now the sun was shining ;
Glistened bright the pearly dew-drops,
That from branch and weed hung pendant ;
In the vale the fog was lifting ;
Floating were light clouds above them,
And between their fleecy substance

Was the azure blue of heaven.
Nature did her best to please them,
And she did their sad hearts lighten,
And she did their faces brighten ;
Yet they were not gayly cheerful.
Miles and miles between the mountains,
Always on the upward tending,
Slowly toiled the lumbering stagecoach.
Oft they stopped to rest the horses ;
Oft our tourists took occasion
Then to find some recreation.
“ See those daisies ! ” shouted Leta,
“ By the roadside ; I will get them.”
“ Leta ! can you now pick daisies ? ”
Pleaded sister Wanameta,
“ While our hearts are sad and lonely ?
Rather let us pick some dull plants,
Weeds whose meaning is of sadness,
More agreeing with our humor.”
Leta, in her desperation,
Clambered out and up th’ embankment ;
Gathered not the daisies only,
But the goldenrod and aster ;

Gathered all the weeds and daisies
That her hands and arms could carry ;
Dressed herself and Wanameta
With the wild flowers that she gathered ;
Put them in the horses' harness ;
Made a bouquet for the driver ;
Gave a shrill laugh, 'waked the echo.
Laughed she loudly, " Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !"
And the echo gave the " Ha ! ha !"
In the voice and tone of Leta.
Catching was her merry laughter,
And the heart of Wanameta
Broke forth in a merry " Ha ! ha !"
Then the air was filled with " Ha ! ha !"
And their echoes from the mountains
Merry " Ha ! ha !" heartfelt " Ha ! ha !"
By this stroke was sadness broken,
By this artful cheer of Leta's.

Passed they on their journey upward,
Views they caught between the mountains,
Open prospects from the hilltops,
That would hold an artist spellbound.



THEN THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH "HA! HA!"

Passed they many mountain houses,
 Near by and on distant hillsides,
 And in valleys down below them,
 There to catch the summer tourists
 Who, from hot and crowded cities,
 Come for pleasure, rest and comfort.
 Like the ebb and flow of ocean
 Is this come and go of people.
 Like unto the ocean, also,
 Does this tide of human beings
 Bear the gold of trade and commerce
 To the mountain and the seashore,
 Making glad the barren places ;
 Making places that no worth had,
 Wondrous mines of gold and silver.
 Now this tide was backward rolling,
 Many to their homes returning,
 To their business and their duties ;
 Else how could they leave the mountains
 In the month of fair September ?
 Many were there yet remaining
 When our tourists came among them,
 For a short stay came among them,

To the house upon the cliff set ;
Cliff descending to the valley
Many hundred feet below them ;
Valley watered by the Hudson,
Distant many miles to eastward,
Drawing her broad banks together,
Dwarfing to a creek the river.
By the distance do the foothills
Into lowly plain diminish,
And in broad view hills and dales there
Meet together—in deception.
Far off in the north sky rise the
Bold tops of the Adirondacks ;
In the east those of New Hampshire
Raise the sky line with their broad backs ;
To the south are hills called Berkshire,
In the State of Massachusetts.
Such a view gives inspiration ;
Such a view is revelation.
From such prospect might have Satan
Offered all the world for worship
To the meek and lowly Jesus.



MANAKATING FROM MANHATTAN.

Turned from this rare scene our tourists,
Filled with rapture and amazement;
Filled with gladness that they came here;
Banished troubles that they cherished.
Even scenes like this lose interest;
Places may not long content us,
Nor well cannot without faces.
Strange it were not had these maidens
Just a little then forgotten
The injunction of their mother—
Not to put their trust in strangers.
For already had the youngsters
Looked upon the girls with favor;
Looked upon them with pleased glances;
Looked upon them with some longing;
When a young man from Manhattan,
From the city of Manhattan,
Whom they knew well and his people,
Suddenly appeared among them;
'Scribed his name upon the big book,
Wrote his name in firm and bold hand:
Manakating, from Manhattan.
How he knew that they were up there,

By what subtile intuition,
By what spirit, imp or goblin,
By what hidden means or token,—
Never have the Fates made known it.
Much there was of speculation,
How he was to them related,
Whether he was cousin to them ;
Whether he was only friendly ;
If to one he was a lover,
Was it this one or the other ?

Many weeks of sun and dryness
Parchéd had the hills and valleys,
Parchéd had the walks and roadways,
Meadows, pastures and the cornfields.
Nature, in her moody changes,
Now had brought the welcomed rain-storm.
'Bove them overcasting clouds were,
And below them vaporous clouds hung,
Or were rolled, as in a cauldron,
By the shifting winds that moved them.
All day long the clouds their rain dropped,
All day long the heavy vapor

Obscured valley and the river,
 Saving only when the west wind,
 Following the winding valley,
 Lifted, as it were a curtain,
 Rolled up, as it were a curtain,
 This great bank of vapor, hanging.
 Worth the trouble of a journey
 To behold the panorama,
 When this cheerless vapor-curtain
 Rolled from off the world below them.
 Lo ! the sun in glory setting,
 Tinting with a brilliant lining,
 With a varied brilliant lining,
 All the scudding clouds to eastward,
 That from sun were hast'ning eastward.
 Then was drawn the evening curtain,
 Studded with the stars of heaven.

Easy is it to imagine
 The impressions made upon them,
 On our trio as they sat there,
 Resting on the broad piazza,
 As in box-seat of the drama,

With this grandest view before them ;—
With these elements of Nature
All about them in confusion ;
In confusion and contention ;
In her efforts to restore there
Normal balance of her power.

Nor can places, views and faces
Fill our every want and craving.
These may satisfy the hunger
Of the heart or soul that yearneth :
The essential of our nature ;
The æsthetic of our nature.
But the craving pangs of hunger
Make us feel our human nature ;
Bring us face to face with real life ;
Make us feel our common being
And our nearness to the mundane.
And Mine Host, a man of business,
With his eye upon the dollars,
Therefore serves his guests at mealtimes
With his satisfying viands.

Days thus followed one another,
Filled with drivings, walkings, strollings,
Filled with Nature's sweet communings.
Strolled they one day to the mountain,
Higher yet, that to the north stands,
And attained the rugged summit.
There is that within our nature
That is striving for the higher ;
Are there peaks above another,
Rest there is not till we reach there.
And our souls are restless, also,
To attain the highest knowledge ;
Knocking at God's own dominion,
At the sealed book of Dame Nature.
Strange it is not that we reverence,
Almost to the point of worship,
Those who live for high and higher,
Who have made the way less clouded
'Twixt ourselves and the Great Maker.

Resting now on rock called Prospect,
Where the scene invited lingering,
Where the gentle breezes fanned them,

Where the trees, below, above them,
Now were putting on their new dress—
Sign of death, and youth departed,
Dress of red, and brown, and yellow.
Soon they will take wings and flutter,
As our souls when life is ended,
Flutter to their restful haven.
Not unlike the soul are these—
Bright winged spirits of the trees,
Like the soul they live forever,
Taken up by vegetation,
Which in turn unto the earth falls,
To appear again in new leaves.
Like unto the leaves our souls are,
Making impress upon others,
And by others unto others,
Till they reach unto perfection.

“Listen to the sighing, sighing,
Of the gentle, murmuring winds there,”
To the maids said Manakating.
“Know you not what winds are saying
To the trees with waving branches,

During all the gentle springtime,
During all the time of summer ?
Thus have winds in softest murmurs
Paid their court unto the trees there ;
But the trees, like bashful maidens,
Bend their heads and wave their branches,
As if they'd escape their presence,
Saying 'No, no,' when they mean yes.
Now the summer has departed,
And the fall is come upon them ;
And the winds will soon grow colder,
And put on a frigid manner,
And their voice will roar and thunder.
Then will sink the heart of forest,
To the ground, the heart of forest,
And their souls, in sear and yellow,
Scatter by the winds of heaven,
Leaving bare the trunks and branches.
But, dear maidens, in the springtime
Will the sun awake to new life
The great winter-chilléd heart-blood,
Up along the trunks and branches,
Leaping though the trunks and branches ;

And, by Nature's secret magic,
Burst out into life and vigor—
All the erstwhile slumbering forest,
Just as though the winter were not.
Oh, the winds are restless, restless,
Changeable and very restless,
Blowing hot and blowing coldly;—
Do not take the winds for suitors.”
“No, no,” said the maidens to him,
“We will take the sun, that's constant ;
We will take the sun, whose genial
And whose cordial life doth lift up
And restore the broken-hearted.”
And the winds are ever sighing,
Sighing, sighing, sighing, sighing,
For the old that's ever dying,
Dying, dying, dying, dying ;
And the sun is ever shining,
Shining, shining, shining, shining,
For the new that's ever coming,
Coming, coming, coming, coming.

While proceeding down the hillside,
Which was often rough and rocky,
Manakating lent assistance
Where 'twas needed,—often where not ;
For a thing not yet explained is,
Why a maid who, unattended,
Quickly clears the rugged stone wall,
Must be helped at every rough step
When a friendly arm is ready.
Manakating gladly rendered
All that could have been expected—
Would have carried them with pleasure
Had occasion dire demanded.
Thus they cleared the rugged hillside
And descended to the level.

Then they playful, like young children,
Ran and got into the hammock,
Under clustering trees there hanging ;
But they scarcely were well seated
When upon the rock they landed,
And surpriséd exclamations
Were the only sounds they uttered.

And they sat upon the rock there,
Hardly knowing where they might be,
For they saw the stars at noonday.
Wanameta broke the silence :
“ What a handsome yellow border
Has the hammock ! Do you notice ? ”
Leta said she took exceptions
To a hammock fringed with yellow,
Then upon the rock primeval
They did make a solemn promise :
Never more to swing in hammocks,
Having yellow colored borders.

Not so free is man, the boasted
Lord of all this fair creation ;
Bound is he by circumstances,
Slave unto his wants and pleasures,
Slave unto the wants of others ;
And, like one that is condemnéd,
At the scheduled time and minute,
As he were in hands of jailor,
Marches to the train that bears him,
’Gainst his wish and those of others,

To his daily cares and labors,
In the evening Manakating
To the south must be returning—
To the Island of Manhattan.
And the hours intervening,
As remorseless Time sped onward,
Were employed as moments precious.
Talked they of the pleasant times had
Hoped they for a future meeting ;
Sometimes were they silent, thinking ;
Sometimes wandered to the cliff's brink,
To drink in its inspiration—
Its enduring inspiration ;
Charged they Fate as cruel, barbarous,
Thus to sever souls congenial,
Vainly then did Manakating
Give his most persuasive reasons
Why the maids should homeward journey
By the way of fair Manhattan,
He would show them “ bear ” and “ bull ” fights ;
How the trusting “ lamb ” is fleecéd ;
Where they trap the golden eagles,
From their haunts in secret hidings,

He would show them mimic battle
On the bright stage of the drama;
Living-pictures; comic acting;
Opera that's bright and pleasing.
"No, no, good my Manakating,"
Said the maidens, firm, unyielding.
"To our home up in the northwest,
Near the lake's blue waters standing
A most welcome invitation
We extend you, should occasion
Turn your thoughts in that direction;
Where the sun from east ascending,
On his morn-awaking journey,
Lifts the veil from hills and valleys,
From the darksome lakes and rivers."

Now the last words had been spoken;
Now were pressing hand-shakes given;
Now the train was downward moving;
Now were kerchiefs gaily waving;
Now were maidens kisses throwing,
Throwing to the winds of heaven.
And was Manakating jealous



AND THE MAIDENS, ONCE MORE LONELY.

That the winds were so well treated,
 While himself must go without them.
 Ever thus are chary maidens
 When they are secure from danger.
 Who can fathom heart of woman?
 And the maidens, once more lonely,
 Sat upon the cliff o'erhanging.
 In a few days to Niagara .
 Would the sisters two be going ;
 Ended then their trip to eastward.

Not thus also ends the pleasure
 Of those few days gone forever ;
 Of the sojourn to the mountain,
 Which now ends with this day's counting.
 Blesséd memory holds them ever,
 And recalls them at her pleasure.
 And to memory's fondest nursing
 Left are maids and Manakating.

At the door of cottage stood they
 To receive their brave young travelers.

Who from east were home returning.
There was father Apalachin,
Who was home from labors ended ;
And their mother, good Omeda,
And their sister, roguish Wawa—
All with open arms awaiting,
All with loving greetings waiting.
Had they camp-fire, had they pipe-smoke ;
Told they all about their journey,
Just as is above related.



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